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ABSTRACT

Independence and the related concepts of freedom and autonomy are key terms in philosophy of education. Teacher educators are keen on independence, but seem to hold different definitions of the concept, and these various definitions do not co-exist happily. The relative autonomy that one may be able to achieve is not to be had unless one acknowledges one's dependence. Without that acknowledgment, the independence that adults hurry toward and hurry their children toward, does not bring the adult solidity and security that were expected. Of course it is quite easy to get children to imitate and internalize the conventional models of independence, but this does not last because true autonomy requires that one have experienced and still be in touch with one's feelings of dependence. (JB)

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STANDING ALONE: DEPENDENCE, INDEPENDENCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATION

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STANDING ALONE: DEPENDENCE, INDEPENDENCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATION.

MORWENNA GRIFFITHS AND RICHARD SMITH

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The infants' school was very keen on the children learning to become independent. The first thing was for them to tie their own shoelaces. This makes life a lot easier for the teacher, too. Our six year-old couldn't manage his laces, and he worried about it, so we sent him to school in shoes with Velcro fastenings. This, we were given to understand, was poor form. How could he ever learn independence if we made him a present of the real thing?

That independence is seen as automatically a more desirable state than dependence has much to do with the natural human dislike of risk and vulnerability. My attachment to particular things and particular people exposes me to the possibility of their loss. If I love an heirloom vase, say, for its sentimental value as well as its intrinsic beauty then my feelings are bound up with and dependent upon its fortunes. It might be safer to become a connoisseur of vases in general, since then there are other candidates for my interest and affection if one is damaged. Safest of all is to become a connoisseur of the quality or qualities for which I loved the vases: to become a lover of beauty in general. To be such a lover is to have access to the source from which all particular instances of beauty are derived; contemplating the form of beauty I have knowledge of that which is independent of all the vicissitudes of this world. So too with people. They change, or move away, or grow up, or die. Our loved ones are hostages to fortune, as the phrase has it. Emotional dependence upon them can only end in grief. If we cannot do without such ties at least we can love others not for their

otherness, their unique, irreplaceable particularity, but for their similarity to ourselves. That is a repeatable quality: substitutes can in principle be found, since we have a good idea of what they are substitutes for. In this way what we have come to regard as Plato's view of love and what its appropriate objects are when love is most nearly itself leads to the kind of picture of friendship discussed by Aristotle in book 6 of the Nichomachean Ethics: friendship or philia characteristically obtains between people of similar nature, and is pursued for the sake of that similarity.

There exists, however, another tradition, one which allows us to celebrate the very conditions which the Platonic strain seeks an escape from. Not only can we accept our dependence on other people but it is also part of our human condition that we are vulnerable to the sheer contingency of the world. Pindar (quoted by Martha Nussbaum at the beginning of The Fragility of Goodness) compares human excellence to the vine, dependent for its flourishing on the accidents of rain, soil, and sun. The contingency or sheer chance of the world is not only to be accepted but even welcomed. Martha Nussbaum comments:

> 'Part of the peculiar beauty of human excellence just is its vulnerability...Human excellence is seen, in Pindar's poem and pervasively in the Greek poetic tradition, as something whose very nature it is to be in need, a growing thing in the world that could not be made invulnerable and keep its own peculiar fineness'.

That is why Greek myths are full of stories of gods falling in love with humans: it is their very vulnerability, their quality of displaying grace and courage despite their mortality, and in full knowledge of their mortality, that the gods pity and admire, loving it more than the endlessly repeatable self-sufficiency of another god.

These conflicting traditions are not clearly reflected in the way dependence and independence are talked about in education. Rather we find a mixture of confused worship of the notion of independence and unequivocal dismissal of the idea that there might be any worth in dependence. Consider first the following examples of use of 'independence'.

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In a small village school near Oxford, the class teacher spends long hours every day keeping individual work programmes up to date. She believes that because each individual is different, the children all need their own independent learning programme. She sees it as part of her job to make this possible. In another school the teacher was explaining why she did NOT want the student teacher to help a group of infant children. She said, "I want them to learn to be independent." What she meant was that the children should learn to work together without consulting an adult. She did not mind at all if they helped each other. Yet another teacher, in a suburban junior school, is worried by the way his student encourages children to help each other in groups. "How will they learn to be independent?" he wants to know, and the unsaid end of the thought is, "If they work together they will be encouraged to cheat." There seem to be various working definitions of 'independence' in use here.

Teacher educators are also keen on independence. In the handout the Polytechnic gives the students about curriculum planning, we suggest the student may wish to consult 'the children' about what topic the class will pursue. Here we seem to be seeing the whole class as an unit which can learn to be independent. In an article about grouping in primary schools, Robin Yeomans discusses the merits of different grouping strategies in terms of independence and dependence. He also mentions interdependence, a word more

likely to be used in formal educational writing, I think, than in everyday discussions of classroom practice. Yeomans recognises the value of 'belonging' or 'interdependence' because of the supportiveness, warmth and security it brings. However, he goes on to say that in order for independent learning and personal growth to occur, children need to "achieve and sustain the balance between belonging and independence." This is all the harder for them to achieve because "the group realities of classroom life are not the same for teachers and for children, but dependency is a seductive trap for both." (pp163-4) He argues that group pressures can lead to compliance by pupils which prevents individuality flourishing. On the face of it these two working definitions are different from each other.

To sum up: children dependent on the teacher's drawing up of their individual work programmes are said to have independent learning programmes. Children who work in groups are said to be learning to be independent. Children who work by themselves in competition with each other are said to be learning to be independent. Children who, as a class, decide on topics and activities are said to be developing independence. Children working in a supportive group are in a good position to develop independence, but they are likely to be seduced by dependence into rejecting real learning and independent growth.

These various meanings do not co-exist happily with each other. The words 'independent', 'independence', 'dependence', and the rest are being used very strangely. On the one hand there is no doubt that 'independence' is being used to describe something that is valued by teachers and lecturers alike. Conversely, 'dependence' is something that is associated with immaturity or inferior education. On the other hand, the words are being used to describe a very wide range of behaviour. In some cases behaviour which is called 'independent' in one classroom will be called 'dependent' in another. This is

very odd: while it is agreed that pupils should learn independence, just what counts as 'learning to be independent' varies from classroom to classroom.

One obvious source of difficulty is the tension between the affirmation of the importance of independence and the affirmation of the importance of groups. It is quite likely that a teacher or lecturer who advocates the value of the development of independence will also be an advocate of grouping. Both are part of the ethos prevailing in primary education (as well as in some other sectors). However, although groups are made up of more than one person, independence is seen as an escape from the influence of other people. My examples make this clear. Even in the example of a class choosing a topic together, attention is focussed on allowing the children to choose (i.e. show their independence) rather than on how the group as a whole affects any children who may in fact be having their choices overruled.

Yeomans suggests that groups are important because they provide the security children need before they can move into independence. This is one way of resolving the tension between independence and grouping. However, many teachers would not be happy with this resolution. Grouping may be valued for a variety of reasons other than the one Yeomans stresses. The ethos of primary education is one in which the needs of individuals are stressed and how those needs are perceived will affect the reasons for grouping. These reasons could include: the intrinsic importance of relationships; the efficient use of scarce resources; the value of talk in the process of coming to understand; and the organisation of large mixed ability groups by streaming. In each of these cases implicit assumptions are being made about the individual which will affect how independence and dependence are described. Comparing two of the cases will help show this.

The teacher emphasising the value of talk will see independence as consisting in the ability to come to one's own conclusions through discussion rather than in the maintenance of purely social relations. The teacher emphasising the importance of personal relations will see independence as consisting, at least partly, in the maintenance of them. For the first teacher the child who maintains friendships at the expense of learning will be described as unduly dependent on emotional belonging, in the way Yeomans describes. For the second teacher 'dependent' will describe the child who is unable to make friends, and who relies on the teacher or on some impersonal object, like a computer, to provide 'friendship' and security. Both these teachers will describe some children in groups as learning to be independent, but they may well disagree with each other about when it is occurring.

Yeomans uses the word 'interdependence' to describe a form of mutual dependence. 'Interdependence' is a word which does not seem to carry the stigma of 'dependence' and it can be useful tool in coming to understand the strange concept of 'independence'. We shall argue below that the strong stigma attached to 'dependence' contributes to the difficulty of understanding it. 'Interdependence' is, however, no clearer an idea than independence or dependence. Yeomans describes interdependence as belonging, a use which is coherent with his descriptions of dependence in emotional terms. The teacher who believes that children should help each other rather than come to her is thinking about a different kind of interdependence. The same kinds of problems arise with concepts like 'community' or 'fellowship'.[1]

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1. See for example Iris Young (1986) on 'community'.

In practice, in every day talk and action, there is no doubt that teachers acknowledge the importance of other people. The class teacher who believes that primary children should work entirely on their own, that he should know as little as possible about their home backgrounds, and that there is a set curriculum to deliver to each of them is not typical of primary teachers. (Tertiary education, teacher education not excepted, is far more likely to be like this.) Most teachers take friendship patterns very seriously, and attach importance to their own personal relationships with the children in their class. They are also likely to play a lot of attention to the importance of the home, community and culture as an influence on the child. The importance of other people in the development of children remains however, insufficiently acknowledged as far as the development of self and of knowledge are concerned. Whether in literature with a psychological or philosophical flavour it is far more common to find 'autonomy' and its cognates posited as the end to which development tends than any recognition that most of us gladly choose a world in which our autonomy is constrained by personal relationships.

RS

The unreflective exaltation of independence is also fuelled by prevailing fantasies about childhood. The 'sturdy, independent' ten year-old climbs trees, fires catapults, swims in streams. His independence (he is of course a boy) is independence of the adult world: he learns directly from nature. This Crusoe-Rousseau fantasy comes down to us through (for example) Tom Brown, Just William and Huckleberry Finn, and includes such honorary boys as Tarzan, Richard Hannay and Alan Quatermain.

Although this Victorian or Edwardian vision of independence is beginning to decline it still has power. It is increasingly difficult, however, to

deceive ourselves that the average child has much access to trees and streams. Parents and teachers who arrange for such access come in for heavy criticism when the children fall off the trees and drown in the streams, for we have another, quite incompatible, fantasy about childhood, which is that it should be risk-free. How, then, is the urban child to match up to our dreams of independence? At this point a new version of the fantasy arises: that of enterprise, of the child as young entrepreneur. No-one yet seems to know exactly what Education for Enterprise <u>is</u>, but this is no obstacle to the mirage being spectacularly well-funded - a clear sign, I would say, that we are here in the presence of a persistent fantasy.

The entrepreneurial fantasy always was linked with the earlier one: the fourth and fifth sentences of <u>King Solomon's Mines</u> are:

> 'At an age when other boys are at school I was earning my living as a trader in the old Colony. I have been trading, hunting, fighting or mining ever since'.

The advantage of the version of child-as-entrepreneur to be found in many TVEI schemes and the Education for Enterprise initiatives that are emerging, where pupils simulate setting up their own companies to make and market musical jacuzzis, is that nobody gets hurt. <u>Commodities</u> (where what we are doing is essentially selling people an image of themselves or of the world) are safer to handle than <u>things</u>, and simulations of commodities are safest of all. Nor do commodities offer the same obdurate resistance to our wills that things do; it is, after all, precisely our fantasies that they are designed to embody. The new entrepreneurial independence has another important advantage over the old: it is itself marketable, a commodity. It spawns an industry of filofaxes and computers as children imitate their elders in the cut-throat competitive world of business. Where Alan Quatermain searched the dawn mists for the pass through the mountains they pore over their spread-sheets, but like him they

are tough-mindedly trying to make their pile at the expense of the competition.

It may seem odd that current rhetoric makes so much of versions of independence. Isn't the independently-minded citizen a threat to the power of the state, to its capacity to transform individuals into pulses in the common will? Actually emphasis on independence is a way of breaking down that far more dangerous thing, community. In his subversive diary Winston Smith writes: 'to the future or to the past, to time which thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone' (Nineteen Eighty-Four, ch.2). One of the first targets of totalitarianism, from Plato to the Party, is that symbol of interdependence, the family. It is recollections of his mother that tell Winston that there is another order of values, not invented or sanctioned by the Party. Thus autonomy, if not freedom, can be slavery.

MG

Independence and the related concepts of freedom and autonomy are key terms in philosophy of education. Indeed they are key concepts in Western traditions of the person and the state. It is hard to find any recent tradition in philosophy of education which seriously questions the value of independence although there is plenty of argument about what might count as independence, autonomy or freedom. The parallel with teacher talk is striking. Independence, autonomy and freedom are all assumed to be good, but just what it is that is good is much less clear.

The Kantian rational autonomous being, Rousseau's Emile, and Rousseau's citizen of the Social Contract are all fathers to our contemporary understanding of the person. Theories of cognitive and ethical development

frequently follow Kantian or Rousseauian paths.[2] Examples are Piaget, Kohlberg, and growth theorists like Froebel. Where groups are discussed it tends to be in terms which owe much to Rousseau's citizen of the Social Contract. The language shows this: discussion tends to be couched in terms of rights, contractual negotiation, freedom and justice, rather than, for instance, love or honour. The person at the heart of contemporary philosophy of education in this country is the familiar independent individual at the heart of Western liberalism.

That there may be something wrong with this model of man is difficult for us to conceive. Some commentators have begun to question it seriously and their views are slowly gaining in popularity. If independence and autonomy are taken to be, roughly, concepts which include no vulnerability, perfect control, lack of contingency, free choice, individualism, social atomism, then criticism can be found. Examples which spring to mind are: After Virtue, The Fragility of Goodness, African philosophy as found in Sandra Harding (1986). All have a view of human flourishing which might be able to deal with the forms of freedom sought by women. Nussbaum, in particular, talks about dependence, vulnerability and contingency as part of the good life for human beings. And she is very careful how she does so, needing literature and example to do so because it is so hard to say in the context of current English language philosophy, and in Western culture as a whole. In fact she takes a long book to build up the argument so it can be said at all, although she introduces the argument right at the beginning.

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2. It is quite possible that it is the Kant and Rousseau of popular repute who are followed, rather than the real ones. See Midgley (1984) and also Ward.

Charles Taylor is another commentator who questions the model, developing an alternative account of persons which shows that understanding the place of emotions in the life of a person undermines dominant assumptions about persons. My own writing about emotions points to the same conclusions in the area of education. I argue that emotions are not private or individual, whether they are rational or not. Indeed, properly understanding emotions entails re-thinking our notions of rationality, and therefore of freedom (1984, 1988a, 1988b).

Many women, feminists included, reject the ideal of independence in some of its forms as lonely and selfish, at the same time as they affirm the need for freedom. There are similarities with tensions in socialism between individual liberty and ideals of brotherhood. Similar tensions can be found in writing by black British or American people, who simultaneously point to the importance of seeing black people as individuals rather than tokens, and to the importance of their cultural backgrounds to them.[3] In this section I shall concentrate on feminist points of view.

Feminists have pointed out that the stereotype of woman is very different from that of independent, autonomous, rational man. It seems that 'man' here does not refer so much to all human beings as to the male sex. Women are not generally supposed to be like this. They are, the stereotype tells us, dependent, passive, illogical, irrational, intuitive, close to nature, emotional and oriented to the personal and private. I believe it is true to say that whatever we feel about individual men and women, or whatever

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3. This is clearly seen in fiction: e.g. the film "My Beautiful Launderette" and stories by the Asian Women's Writers' Workshop. Also see Westwood and Bachu; Brah and Minhus.

individuals believe about men and women in general, the stereotype is still widely held to be true.[4]

We should be clear immediately that this stereotype of women is not something that ordinary people have believed but philosophers have not. The Kantian rational autonomous being, Rousseau's Emile, and Rousseau's citizen of the Social Contract are all fathers to our contemporary understanding of the person. This is a legacy which is still deeply gendered. Kant explicitly excluded women from full autonomy.[5] Rousseau like Kant explicitly excludes women from his vision of man. This is obvious in Emile. Sophie's education is to be very different from Emile's. Indeed it is essential to Emile's well-being as an autonomous adult that Sophie does not share his education[6]

Were Kant and Rousseau simply mistaken here? Should they have shown their true enlightenment by including women in their ideal for man? Indeed, could they have done so? Jane Roland Martin points out how difficult it would be to include the whole population in the educational prescriptions intended for males. Emile needed Sophie. Mary Midgley points out that it would be impossible for the entire population to "go the whole atomist hog" and become "full-time contracting egoists." (1988, p. 32) She goes on:

> "Shulamith Firestone undoubtedly did everyone a great service by vigorously extending this notion to women, and pointing out the absurdity of mens' viewing themselves as totally detached individuals in relation to the rest of society, while still expecting to go home to

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4. See for instance Helen Weinreich-Haste in Jan Harding (ed) (1986) who refers to some of the many recent empirical studies.
5. See, for instance, Ward, p.25; Grimshaw.
6. See Martin, for instance.

a wife who would always have their dinner hot for them in the evening." (1988, p. 36)

It is true that some feminists have taken the line that women need to attain masculine-style autonomy, saying, in effect, that women should try to be more like (stereotypical) men. Others have taken the opposite one, saying that the world would be a better place if men were more like women. It has proved very hard to imagine either of these. Utopias based on androgeny have more often supposed that both women and men need characteristics from both genders. However, even these utopias are hard to imagine, since the characteristics assigned to either sex are in opposition: rational / emotional; autonomous / dependent; etc. These utopias usually demand a wholesale restructuring of the way people live and the values they hold. Consider, for instance, the treatment of childbearing in Piercy or in Gilman. One sex logically cannot simply take on the (stereotypical) characteristics of the other while retaining the (stereotypical) characteristics of their own. Yet both sets of characteristics are needed by society as a whole. This is something most clearly seen by women, no doubt because they are the ones who, it is usually assumed, must change.

Women's problem, it may be remembered, has been defined as lack of autonomy and independence. Yet many women refuse to see this as a problem. Even though they may not be content with their lot, and even though they may resent the unfairness of present gender roles, many women deny the desirability of independence. This has been pointed out by Jean Grimshaw in her discussion of autonomy and dependence in feminist thinking (Grimshaw, 1986). Autonomy and independence are easily equated with emotional and financial self-sufficiency. It is a short step from here to seeing them as lonely and isolating, even selfish. Some feminists have proposed sisterhood as an antidote, but however attractive, it is not a substitute. It is an

ideal of relationships of equals based on choice, or, alternatively, a mutual sympathy based on recognition of commonalities. But it must be obvious to more women than men how untypical such relationships are, by comparison to those in which we all participate: parent, child, neighbour. So far from being chosen, all these are contingent. Moreover, none of them are, typically, ones of equality.

That women reject lonely self-sufficiency does not entail that they are not wanting freedom of any kind. On the contrary, all over the world women have been demanding liberation from injustice, and the freedom to control their own lives, for a long time. There is no contradiction here if freedom is freedom to be yourself, to speak for yourself, to determine your own life. But it does necessitate knowing who that self is. The search for personal identity is central to the liberation of women.

The affirmation of the importance of links with particular other persons can also be found in the writing by women from non-Western cultures. Again and again, the emphasis is placed not on solitary self-sufficiency as the location of personal identity, but on a rich variety of family and friendly connections.[7]

Consider the case of Marialice, a poor woman in Brazil (Patai, 1988). Patai has transcribed Marialice's life story. The purpose is to understand her life through her own interpretation of it. Patai quotes Lugones and Spelman: "Having the opportunity to talk about ones life, to give an account of it, to interpret it, is integral to leading that life rather than being led through it." (Patai, p163.) By any standards Marialice's life is a hard one, a

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7. See, for instance, Atiya, Creider, and Emecheta as well as Patai.

struggle to make ends meet through long hours of paid and unpaid work. But Patai comments:

> "To see Marialice purely as a victim (is) to miss the point. ... It is the self-expression of a woman who is doing what we all do: struggling to make sense of events that are beyond her control and to establish a place for herself in terms of the things that are within her control, and doing so not only through her actions but also through her representation of those actions via language. In Marialice's case, the material circumstances of her life are largely beyond her control. She cannot move into a higher income bracket which is her first and greatest need. What she has done, instead, is to humanize her surroundings, to try and forge human relations within the situations that constrain her. And she is not unsuccessful at this; it is family ties and kin networks that make life tolerable at the poverty level, where the majority of Brazil's population is situated." (p.163)

Marialice does not see her freedom in the rejection of family ties in favour of self-sufficiency, any more than do Western women who reject independence as lonely and selfish.

The emphatic rejection of lonely self-sufficiency (or of a life based only on a sisterhood of non-needy equals) shows that the personal identity which is avowed is one which depends on particular other persons, who may not be equals - such as children. This message can be read particularly clearly in the case of British Asian women. Well-meaning white British have seen their needs as being self-sufficiency, to be achieved by escape from the family and its demands. Arranged marriage has been cited as an especially significant bond to burst in those Asian communities that practice it. Indeed Asian cultural practices in general, and Moslem ones in particular are viewed as a

problem for equality, justice and freedom for girls[8]. All this is denied in the writing of Asian girls and women, who rarely see their freedom in leaving their families and communities, and the cultural practices which are part of themselves. To do so would be to deny something essential in their personal identities. They do, nevertheless, affirm their need to be free within family and community[9]

It is important that this argument is seen as coming from within feminism, white and Asian. It is not a comfortable argument to the effect that women are happiest in the home and should stay there. It is a very uncomfortable argument that the dominant understanding of the concepts of autonomy and independence are not applicable to the lives of many women. This fact casts grave doubt on their applicability to the lives of men too.

I have argued: women often reject independence for themselves, at least in its usual conception; the ideal of independence as liberal, social atomism is anyway incoherent; the incoherence may be easier for women to notice; women claim the right to define their own needs, to be themselves, and this is not the same as egoistic or contractual independence. The upshot of this argument is that the concepts of autonomy and independence do not fit our lived experience very well. The concepts need to be overhauled. The suggestion is not to start again with a different set of values entirely. Something of autonomy and independence is to be preserved - but it should be put into a different context. The overhauling must take into account the proper valuing

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8. See for instance, Harris.
9. This is clearly seen in fiction: e.g. the films of Hanif Kuareshi, My Beautiful Launderette and Sammie and Rosie Get Laid. And in the writing such as the collection of stories by the Asian Women Writers' Workshop, Right of Way. Also see Westwood and Bhachu, and Weiner.

of things that are often labelled as 'dependence'. That is they need to be seen as part of the good human life.

All this is already implicit in much educational practice: caring, multiculturalism, group activities, community. But it is not well worked out in a coherent framework. Working it out is made more difficult by the rhetoric of independence, individualism, autonomy, etc. Indeed it seems to me that caring, multiculturalism and the rest are often described in terms which use independence as a key concept. We speak of working independently in groups, caring about individual interests and allowing individuals to become independent. Not surprisingly, we get very confused about what should be done in practice. It would be less confusing if we realised that education needs to preserve and develop aspects of dependence, properly conceived, as well as aspects of independence.

The Oddness of Concepts

One reason why it is hard to talk about dependency is that it is a very odd word. The question is how a mature woman could want to be a dependent - even if she does not express it quite so starkly. Perhaps the word is itself misleading? Consider who is called a dependent. There is an oddness in the language here. It is usually assumed that dependents are women and children economically dependent on a man: he brings home the bacon. Dependents are not usually taken to be the men and children dependent on a woman for housework or for emotional support. In other words in a traditional household, when a woman and a man are both in a state of dependence, the woman is called 'dependent' and the man is called 'independent'. It is of course true that the woman has the more dangerous dependence. She is making herself incapable of becoming economically independent, while he remains capable of finding emotional support and domestic help.

The same oddness is to be found in the language of dependence surrounding sexual relations. "There ain't nothing like a dame" can be sung by a group of men without any suggestion that they are dependent or vulnerable. It is true that men have complained about the seductive power of women, but it is a limited power even then. A man without a woman may be sorry for himself but he remains a whole person. A woman wanting a man is more often supposed to be in a state of need resulting from her supposed inability to function properly without one. A woman's life is supposed to revolve round a man and his children. He gives her life meaning. Popular fantasy literature bears this out. Men's thrillers are about action in which they may get a woman as a bonus. Women's romances are about getting a man. This is all most extraordinary at the same time as being utterly commonplace.

Language reclamation

It is becoming clear that the concepts of 'dependence' and 'independence' won't do the work we want them to. They come with associations that are powerful and attractive so overhauling them would mean a lot of work. It is time that this work was done. However, the old ones, as I have been arguing, are not just confusing but also misleading - even pernicious. It is high time that we got together to do some re-naming, reclaiming of language to suit our own purposes, and re-conceptualising of those purposes.

At this stage I shall turn to feminist analysis because one of the tasks that feminism has set itself is just this task of 're-claiming language' or 'naming'. Language is by no means simple, so there are number of ways in which this task can be done.[10] I shall use examples unrelated to dependence and

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10. All of them are a version of glasnost or perestroika.

independence, so the general point can be made. I'll return to dependence and independence again at the end of this section.

Most straightforwardly, the illogicalities and inadequacies of a name can be unpacked and displayed. This is often a powerful action. An example here is the feminist analysis of work in general and housework in particular. It became clear that the idea that 'women don't work' was one that carried all kinds of unfair implications. As a result of the way feminists have displayed the lack of logic in the use of the word 'work' it is now much more probable that decision makers will take into account that paid employment is just one kind of work.[11]

There are other ways of reclaiming the language. Words may have to be invented. Ways of speaking may have simply eliminated certain concepts. In her illuminating discussion of learning the language used by defence strategists, Carol Cohn shows that "technostrategic" language and ordinary English refer to such different phenomena that they are mutually untranslatable. She argues, "Technostrategic language can be used only to articulate the perspective of the users of nuclear weapons, not that of the victims." (198 , p. 706) Of course jargon can sometimes be used in a way which is all too familiar, to exclude outsiders. But her point is that the problem of translation is more fundamental than this.

> "No matter how well-informed or complex my questions were, if I spoke English rather than expert jargon, the men responded to me as

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11. Languages carry double messages. As well as the most usual and powerful ways of understanding there are others. Women have always known that 'a woman's work is never done' at the same time as they knew their husbands would not like them to work. They know that men are really just little boys at the same time as they know that women will be referred to as girls all their lives in situations where men will never be referred to as boys.

> if I were ignorant, simpleminded or both ... I adapted my everyday speech to the vocabulary of strategic analysis. I spoke of "escalation dominance", "preemptive strikes," and, one of my favourites, "subholocaust engagements." ... I found that the the better I got at engaging in this discourse, the more impossible it became for me to express my own ideas, my own values. ... To pick a bald example: the word "peace" is not a part of this discourse. As close as one can come is "strategic stability," a term that refers to a balance of numbers and types of weapons systems - not the political, social, economic and psychological conditions implied by the word "peace." Not only is there no word signifying peace in this discourse, the word "peace" itself cannot be used. To speak it is immediately to brand oneself as a soft-headed activist instead of an expert, a professional to be taken seriously." (198 , p. 708).

Cohn is describing how words can get left out of the language. In recent times there have been a number of words coined that now seem to describe quite significant parts of experience. I have already spoken of emotional work. More widespread and well-known examples are words like gender, sexism, etc. There are also words that have changed their meaning, in that they are now considered suitable subjects for serious discussion - such as 'housework'.[12] In education we now have words like 'balance', 'match' and 'progression', words for 'norm referencing' or 'criterion referencing' that I think are not just jargon but which actually name things that were not named before.

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12. A. Oakley describes how difficult she found it to get her projected thesis on housework accepted as a suitable subject for study. That was in the early seventies. Such a difficulty would not exist today.

Language is more than individual words. The metaphors that structure our thinking may also need to be changed. One familiar to philosophers is the 'argument is war' metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson). Ayim describes what she teaches in her philosophy classes:

> "We value our sharper students whom we might openly praise for their penetrating insights. ... [because] we require an able opponent with whom we can parry in the classroom, so as to exhibit to the others what the thrust of philosophical argument is all about. This behaviour is somewhat risky however, as we must take care always to have the upper hand, to win thumbs down, ... If we find ourselves pressed for time at the end of the lecture, with our back to the wall, or as it is occasionally even more colourfully expressed, between a rock and a hard place, we may have to resort to strong-arm tactics, to barbed comments, to go for the jugular, to cut their argument to pieces, to bring out our big guns or the heavy artillery." (Ayim, 1987, p23)"

It is hard even to imagine argument as being friendly, collaborative or conversational, although there are a few attempts being made to do so. [13] It is easy to see that increasing the range of metaphors for argument would open the way to a variety of processes of argument.

The example "argument is war" is a a useful one because it easy for the philosophically minded to see. It is also easy for us to appreciate the real consequences of using it. Lakoff and Johnson describe many more. Their

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13. Compare Jane Martin: "A good conversation is neither a fight nor a contest. Circular in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent, it is an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries but as human beings come together to talk and listen and learn from one another." (Martin, 1985, p.9) R Rorty in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature also talks about confrontation and conversation. But he and I are not talking about the same thing.

argument that metaphors systematically structure the language can be used to show the connections between previously separate pieces of feminist criticism. I will argue that a metaphor of sexuality systematically pervades the language.[14]

Science is perhaps the most widely remarked on example of the use of sexuality metaphors. One of them is "nature is a woman". Another is "a scienist is male". Evelyn Fox Keller (1985) traces the use of sexual imagery in the history of modern science in the section of her book called "Historical couplings of mind and nature". The imagery is still in use today as Brian Easlea points out (1986). For instance, nature is still referred to as 'she': men still try to master and control her by penetrating her secrets.

Science is closely linked to the use of reason. So it is not surprising that the language of reason itself is structured by the sexual metaphor. That it is so structured has been argued by Lloyd, who traces the gender bias attached to shifting concepts of reason in Western culture since the Greeks. What is striking in her account is that the concept of reason has changed dramatically, but its gender bias has not. These analyses of sexual metaphors in science and in philosophy are historically specific. In both of them it is apparent that, in modern Western thinking at least, masculinity becomes attached to those concepts which signify freedom and control. It is also, simultaneously, used for that which is more valued.

Since sexuality is marked by two sexes the metaphor of sexuality is a dualistic one. It has been pointed out by many commentators that the

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14. I'll allude to feminist theory here, in effect assuming the reader's familiarity with it. It is of course more complex and promblematical than my summary here would suggest.

structure of much of our thinking is dualistic. Examples are mind / body, nature / reason, subject / object, matter / energy, and emotion / reason. The French feminist philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray argues that the duality arises from the sexual structuring of the language. She writes from a Lacanian perspective (while remaining critical of it) so her terminology may be unfamiliar to Anglo-Saxon ears. She does not speak of metaphor, but rather of the imaginary. She argues that it is the male imaginary that governs Western rationality. The symbolic order is dominated by the imaginary of the male - and the male sex organ. Women she says is the "sex which is not one" - this is a pun. From the male point of view, 'not being one' refers to the male supposition that females lack genitals because they cannot easily be seen. From the female point of view 'not being one' refers to the sex which is many, which has at least two, probably more, and which can see the world in terms of more than one or nothing.[15]

Evelyn Fox Keller discusses the effects of using dualist thinking (1986). As she puts it, we must learn to count past two. Like Irigaray she argues that the existence of dualism in thinking is associated with sexuality (using object relations rather than Lacanian theory). In dualist thinking a concept that describes the world can be unitary. It picks out a single class of cases, leaving everything else as residue (to use a term used by Irigaray). Alternatively, it can be binary. It picks out two classes, which are defined as different from each other, and mutually incompatible. Her example is science. Either it is unitary: there is science. Alternatively it is binary: there is masculine science and feminine science in which each is quite different from the other, and we are left in a radical relativism. No other

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15. My reading here is greatly influenced by Whitford (1988).

possibilities are allowable. Like Irigaray she argues for the possibility of plurality in describing the world. [16]

That dualism arises from a sexual imaginary or metaphor is significant because it ensures that where it exists the two concepts can never be equally valued. Even where the female is accorded value, it is always less than that accorded to the male. Indeed, to question the value of the concept is to question the value of masculinity and the male sex organ. This is unthinkable in our current symbolic order. The result is that thought is short-circuited and that the concepts are ill understood.

I have been describing how language may be reclaimed, and what needs to be understood before reclamation can begin. Firstly, the logic, or lack of it, underlying the use of the words of ordinary English can be exhibited and laid open to criticism. Secondly, and harder to see, there are unnamed concepts in a language. These concepts can only be named when there is a climate in which they are allowable. Finally, I have argued that underlying many concepts in our language is a sexual metaphor of dualism. Since dualism derives from sexuality, masculinity is associated with one side of it. This is at the deepest level. In short, we can show the inadequacies of the logic of language, we can name, and we can address the metaphorical substructure. It should be clear that this is an account of language which is anything but deterministic. It may point to the strong influence that language exercises on the way we think, but it also shows how language can evolve and change as a result of thinking.

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16. She uses the work of Barbara McClintock, a Nobel prize winner in medecine and physiology, as an example of the value of plurality in scientific thinking.

Reclamation and the language of dependence and independence.

What has all this to do with dependence and independence? What we see is a dualistic system. I would argue that it is one is which is unitary rather than binary in form, though there are traces of dualism to be found. It is unitary in so far as independence is regarded as being good and desirable and dependence is not. The binary traces are to be found in concepts of interdependence, community, fellowship, citizenship and the like. These are taken to be the opposite pole, the counter-culture.

The strong feelings attached to sexuality attach themselves to the concepts of independence and its alternatives because it is dualistic in form. So the dominant (masculine) culture will affirm independence, for fear of the feminine. Questioning it may seem radically subversive: in danger of attacking all that is held dear. The counter culture will affirm dependence, community, etc, as a radical alternative. Values attach themselves in either case and the full pluralistic complexity of the world is hard to see, let alone understand.

It will be no easy matter to re-conceive independence and dependence. Some examples will show how difficult it is to talk of them straightforwardly. The value I place on dependence and on independence are both experienced by me in everyday life, and yet when I try to explain using this set of concepts, I find that I speak paradoxically. What I say matches the experience of others, and yet can sound very odd indeed. For instance, it is true to say that I am dependent on my parents. This dependence is not the same as it was when I was a child, but it is there, all the same. I like this dependence. I do not want to be less close to them. Conversely, they are dependent on me, and they too value the closeness that is the reason for the dependence. No doubt they were also dependent on me when I was a child. Their happiness and purposes in life were partly bound up in myself and my brothers. On the other hand, I am

glad that I am independent of them, that I live in my own household. They are equally glad that they are independent of me in their old age, that they live in their own household.

This is not the only dependence I value. All my life I have looked for close relationships of love and friendship, and I have been glad when I have found them. In making a close relationship, dependency is embraced: vulnerability and need cannot be eliminated / hedged about by contracts or talk of rights. In fact, in many close relationships, while some mutuality is essential, equality is not on the cards. Consider siblings, parents and children, and many traditional marriages. On the other hand, I value my independence in this area of my life. The wrong close relationships are damaging and distressing, and a certain independence is needed to prevent them developing. Small children have not yet attained this and they have to be provided with a close relationship by adults, and helped with making others, at the same time as they learn to be mature enough, independent enough, to make their own.

Further, and still paradoxically, these dependent close relationships often feel as though they increase freedom more than they diminish it. I would argue that this feeling reflects the truth of the matter. Only by being able to become dependent on others can most people (perhaps all people) conduct their lives freely and happily. Dorothy Rowe's book on the experience of depression points this up. Many of her patients are reduced to immobility by their detachment from others. Their lives become free again when they are able to accept dependence. Here are two examples: the first is a depressed woman, unable to get on with her life, or even to leave her home at all:

> "Q. So you see loving somebody as being dependent on that person? A. Yes. Q Could you conceive of loving somebody and not being dependent on that person? A. No. If you love someone, your emotions

are involved aren't they? You give someone the right to play with your emotions. You're dependent on them to look after your emotions. Q. When you love your children, in that love do you feel you're dependent on them? A. I feel that." (p. 69)

And again:

"I remember when we first got married, I remember thinking the most important thing was I mustn't get too fond of him, because he might drop dead. It was the same with the children." (p.68)

It was after she changed this view that she was free to find friends, do a job, and enjoy her children and grandchildren. This view of dependence and independence was a recurring theme with the other patients too. A violent young man had the following dialogue with Dorothy Rowe:

"Q.Can you only conceive of yourself as b‹ ·ng independent when you're nasty? Can't you see yourself as being independent, good, nice and loving? A. No. You need more than one person to be loving. You've both got to love each other. Q. You feel in that situation you wouldn't be independent? A. Well, you aren't are you?" (p.215)

This young man, too, did not become free until he learnt to become dependent.

RS

As these examples show, dependence is not something we ought to accept <u>for the sake of</u> autonomy, as if it were a stage to go through and pass beyond to proper adult independence, or as if dependence were a continual but sometimes inconvenient need, like that for sleep, which we have to meet if we are to do the <u>really</u> important things in life. My family, on whom I depend emotionally, are not a support mechanism with the essential function of enabling me the better to go out and deal autonomously and enterprisingly with the world. The case is rather that the relative autonomy that we may be able to achieve is not to be had unless we acknowledge our dependence. Without

that acknowledgement the independence that we hurry towards, and hurry our children towards, does not bring the adult solidity and security that we expected. Of course we can quite easily get the children to imitate and internalise the conventional models of independence, if we want them to. In the classroom they will put a jealous arm around their work and learn not to ask too many questions. Outside it they may even build tree houses and rob birds' nests if they can find any. They will do what we want them to, for they are good children. Just so the good analysand, the 'analytically talented patient', if he senses that the analyst wants him to stand on his own feet again as quickly as possible, is rapidly 'cured'. This does not last because true autonomy requires us properly to have experienced - and still be in touch with - our feelings of dependence, whether on our current 'significant others', the analyst perhaps, or our parents who by pushing us too fast towards 'independence' left us with the need to have our feelings of dependence accepted. It is worth spelling out here the tension between on the one hand the interpretation of autonomy widespread in philosophy and particularly philosophy of education, which by linking autonomy closely to acting on principle implicitly denigrates the place of feelings, and on the other hand, the insistence in psychoanalytical traditions that there is no significant degree of autonomy without insight into the 'true self' and its feelings.

RS

Of all philosophical topics, dependence is least likely to be clarified by a philosophical procedure which implicitly asserts that the true philosopher is the independent hero who fights his own battles and defends his position against all comers.

Perhaps in the end we must simply accept that some things can no longer be said. The rhetoric of independence and autonomy is so powerful that it sounds paradoxical to assert the value of dependence. But what it has become virtually impossible to say may still be shown, and then one day we may be able to say it again. Art shows, it keeps truth alive; and when words need to be redeemed art made out of words is most valuable.

In Lawrence's novel The Rainbow people make doorways with and thus for each other, admitting one another into newer and richer worlds. Tom and Lydia are each more in their togetherness than either could be separately. They are as the two parts of an arch, forming a doorway, stronger in their leaning together (ch. 3). So Will and Anna set up sheaves of corn in the field by moonlight, leaning their sheaves together 'till they should be together, till they should meet as the sheaves that swished together' (ch. 4); and Will has a vision of 'timeless consummation' in Lincoln Cathedral, 'where the thrust from the earth met the the thrust from the earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy' (ch. 7). This dependence can be achieved - for it is seen as an achievement - by people who have a sufficiently secure sense of self. Ursula, the daughter of Will and Anna, lacks this: 'she was never herself, since she had no self' (ch. 12). So it was that 'An all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies', and it is natural for her to be drawn to her teacher, Winifred Inger, 'a rather beautiful woman of twenty-eight, a fearless-seeming clean type of modern girl whose very independence betrays her sorrow' (ibid.).

Ursula's efforts towards independence are like what later writers in another tradition call the building of the false-self system. A few generations earlier a girl like Ursula would have effectively inherited a sense of self, she would have found it in the sum of her given roles. Or she

might like her mother, Anna, have found it in fecundity and family. We have learnt to disparage lives like these. But Ursula must build what we now call a sense of identity on nothing, or on nothing more than opposition and rebellion. This is a false self because it is willed into being rather than discovered and experienced as right. Even as she longs for it Ursula knows it will bring no satisfaction: such independence is the 'cold liberty' to do exactly as she likes. She is tempted to escape into the oblivion of mechanical drudgery which will at least make her feel part of the everyday, working world.

MG + RS

Other times and other places too have seen dependence as inevitable. Here we'll use George Eliot's novel Silas Marner The story is particularly powerful because Eliot carefully describes how contentedly autonomous / independent Marner is before the arrival of the child.

> "So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction that had no relation to any other being. His life had reduced itself to the functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. The same sort of process has perhaps been undergone by wiser men, when they have been cut off from faith and love - only, instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well-knit theory."

In contrast to Marner's self-sufficiency, the villagers of Raveloe felt "it was nothing but right a man should be looked on and helped by those who could afford it". They take it for granted that Silas will come to depend in his old age on the child Eppie whom he has taken in. This is an instructive

novel, for Silas has fled to the mutual dependence of the rural community from the competitive, entrepreneurial world of the city of the industrial revolution. Only as he comes to accept this dependence ('there was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men, a faint consciousness of dependence on their goodwill') can chance favour him and he can be visited by grace, in the form of the fortuitous arrival of the child whose golden hair he at first takes for the return of his money.

In the world of Raveloe people are properly dependent on things just as they are on each other. The housewives' storing up of linen 'for the life to come', as we first see it cynically through Silas Marner's eyes, we later understand is part of the art of living. Things, unlike commodities, have their own there-ness and it is no disgrace to respond to them emotionally. We know something to Marner's credit when we learn that he has glued together the pieces of his old brown pot after it was broken: in that dependence lies the potential for the fuller dependence that brings him content.

> "Silas would not consent to have a grate and oven added to his conveniences: he loved the old brick hearth as he had loved his brown pot - and was it not there that he had found Eppie? The gods of the hearth exist for us still; and let all new faith be tolerant of that fetishism, lest it bruise its own roots".

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